

Cooperative Catalogers' Lived Experience Implementing Resource Description and Access: Developing Best Practices for Creating Global Metadata

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ABSTRACT

Through the lens of Bijker's (1995) social construction of technology theory, this phenomenological study examines the lived experience of catalogers implementing Resource Description and Access (RDA) to create bibliographic records that are interoperable within and outside of library catalogs. During this transformative time, even the models and principles on which RDA is based are evolving. RDA is the first step in improving access to information and it continues to evolve in order to meet its stated objectives. Other standards for encoding and systems for displaying bibliographic data must also further develop to effect the change. This study sought to capture the perspectives and lived experiences of catalogers in multiple types of libraries fulfilling their foundational purpose: to create metadata that improves accessibility to quality information resources for all. RDA has fundamentally changed the way catalogers and metadata specialists describe resources. In combination with the proliferation of information in the world, this creates a twofold problem. First, it is difficult for catalogers and metadata specialists to follow new cataloging codes that are evolving and have multiple models for implementation. The conceptual models on which the new cataloging codes such as RDA are based have changed and require new assumptions, theories, models, practices, and tools. Secondly, the public is more challenged than ever to access trustworthy information. When taken together, this twofold problem forms a new reality for librarianship and the rapidly changing nature of the information ecosystem. While there have been some online questionnaires and informal surveys used to investigate catalogers' implementation efforts using new cataloging codes, there is a need for research-based evidence about the firsthand experiences of catalogers and metadata specialists who have used new cataloging codes. The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experience of catalogers' and metadata specialists' implementation of RDA and to fill the gap in the literature. The results of this study provide essential information pertaining to the struggles and successes of those in the cataloging field upon which best practices for RDA implementation may be developed. The central research question for this study was: What are the meanings, structures, and essence of the lived experience of catalogers and metadata specialists implementing Resource Description and Access (RDA)?

TOPICS

cataloging; metadata; linked data; library technology systems; social justice; information ethics